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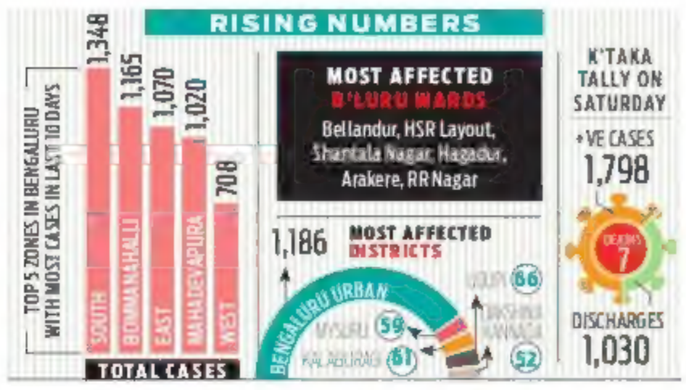
TOKYO SAYS NO TO FANS FROM ABROAD

In a historic decision, no spectators from outside Japan will be allowed to watch the Olympic Games because of the pandemic. Officials said the risk was too great to admit ticket holders from overseas during a pandemic. About one million tickets are reported to have been sold to fans from outside Japan. Organisers have promised refunds.



K'taka adds 1,798 Covid cases in a day

Bengaluru Urban driving spike with over 1,000 cases; 4 other dists big contributors

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

IN the biggest single-day spike so far this year, Karnataka recorded 1,798 new cases of Covid-19 on Saturday while also witnessing seven deaths. The total number of active cases in the state now stands at 12,828.

The biggest contributor to the spiralling numbers is Bengaluru Urban district, with 1,186 new cases. Other districts which saw double-digit figures are Udupi (66), Kalaburgi (61), Mysuru (59) and Dakshina Kannada (52) on Saturday. The state increased the number of tests to 94,043 on Saturday from 91,884 on Friday. Also, 72,024 people were vaccinated on Saturday of whom 50,880 were those aged above 60.

In Bengaluru, a new cluster was reported in Vyalikaval, where a family of five and two of their neighbours tested positive for Covid-19. According to BBMP officials, the first person to test positive was a woman who was the primary contact of a courier delivery person from Indiranagar. The woman's family members too were also found to be positive later on.

During the exercise of tracking and testing primary and secondary contacts, two immediate neighbours of the family also tested positive. Of the seven patients, four have been shifted to a government hospital for treatment. Other primary and secondary contacts are being traced and tested, a BBMP health official said.

As per BBMP records, 14 clusters have emerged in Bengaluru since March 1. Most of these are being reported from apartment complexes and hostels. BBMP officials are now focusing on such areas to intensify testing, the official added. REPORTS: P3

HUMAN RIGHTS, LAC ISSUES DOMINATE INDIA-US PARLEYS

PUSHKAR BANAKAR & MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

INDIA's tension with China on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and alleged human rights violation in India were among the major issues that figured in the talks between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and US Defence Secretary Llyod Austin on Saturday.

Austin is on a two-day visit to India. This is the first overseas visit by a top functionary of the Biden administration.

Sources said Austin told Jaishankar that "as the two largest democracies in the world, human rights and values are important to us and we will lead with these values".

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and US Defence Secretary Lloyd James Austin III making Covid-appropriate contact in New Delhi on Saturday | PTI

Later, talking to reporters, Austin said, "India is our partner whose partnership we value... Partners need to be able to have those kinds of discussions. And certainly, we feel comfortable in doing that and you can have those discussions in a very meaningful way and still make progress."

The issue of human rights was raised amid global concerns raised over the government's handling of the farmer protest, alleged persecution of minorities and independent voices being gagged. Ahead of Llyod's visit, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee had urged him to take up the issue with India. P9

EXPRESS READ

India claim T20I series 3-2 with 36-run win

India defeated England by 36 runs in the fifth T20I to claim the series 3-2 on Saturday. Rohit Sharma's 64 off 34 balls laid the foundation for the win. P13

WITH THIS ISSUE

GETTING FUTURE-READY

RSS picks K'taka man Hosabale for key post

ASHWINI M SRIPAD & MANISH ANAND
@ Bengaluru/New Delhi

AIMING to position the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (RSS) at the forefront to address "modern societal complexities" and prepare the new leadership, the Akhil Bhartiya Pratinidhi Sabha, the top decision-making body of the organisation, on Saturday unanimously elected **Dattatreya Hosabale** (66) to succeed Suresh 'Bhaiyyaji' Joshi as the next Sarkaryawah (general secretary). Joshi had served as general secretary for 12 years.

The RSS Sarsanghchalak, Mohan Bhagwat, had lately opened up the organisation to a host of contemporary issues in his interactions with the national and international media.

Sharing his thoughts on the road ahead for the RSS, Hosabale said there is a need for an intellectual campaign. "It is time to set right the narrative on India," he stressed. On the hotly debated issue of 'love jihad', he said the organisation will fully support laws to regulate it, while favouring inter-caste marriages. He also stressed on the need for reservation for backward communities. P4

Madhav recalled to Sangh fold

Six months after he was dropped from BJP's national team, the RSS recalled former BJP national general secretary Ram Madhav to its fold. Seen as BJP's powerful general secretary, Madhav was sidelined in the run-up to the 2019 election. Madhav will now be on RSS' national executive. Besides Madhav, JP Nadda had dropped another national general secretary, P Muralidhar Rao. Both Rao and Madhav were the nominees of the RSS in the BJP, and the names of their replacements will be revealed soon, said [illegible].

Maharashtra HM used disgraced cop Waze to extort money?

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

IN a fresh twist to the bomb scare case near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence, former Mumbai Police Commissioner **Param Bir Singh** on Saturday accused state Home Minister Anil Deshmukh of using arrested assistant police inspector Sachin Waze to extort money. In an eight-page letter addressed to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Singh said Waze was given an extortion target of ₹100 crore per month.

Rejecting Singh's charges, Deshmukh threatened to sue the ex-Mumbai police chief. He said Singh was levelling false allegations as he faced arrest in the bomb-scare case.

Singh said Waze was called to Deshmukh's residence, where the minister told him to collect ₹2-3 lakh each from the 1,750-odd bars and restaurants in the city. Waze was allegedly asked to tap into other sources to meet the shortfall. Sharing transcripts of purported chats with his colleagues, Singh said it was normal for Deshmukh to bypass the brass and channel the course of probes. The ex-CoP said he had kept NCP chief Sharad Pawar and DyCM Ajit Pawar abreast of the misdeeds.

The CM's office confirmed receipt of an email from Singh. "We are checking its authenticity and the Home department is trying to contact Singh. The letter emailed by Parambir Singh is from an ID different than his official one," the CMO said.

Singh was transferred as Commandant-General of Maharashtra Home Guards over his alleged mishandling of the case. P10

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